

2014 Refuge Naturalist Training Program

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Introduction: Parker River National Wildlife Refuge provides the public with a range of “visitor services.” These services include refuge tours (via motor vehicle, kayak, bicycle, and on foot), tide pool programs, environmental education programs for kids, guided walks and other interpretive programs, and special events. With a very small staff, the success and reach of the visitor services program requires the active support and involvement of volunteers who possess the specific knowledge and skills to develop, lead, and assist with these various programs. **The refuge needs more trained volunteers to help take its visitor services program to the next level.** The Refuge Naturalist Program is intended to help address that need.

The Training Program: Volunteers who lead or assist with the delivery of educational and interpretive programs on a national wildlife refuge need to have a basic understanding of wildlife, their habitats, and refuge management. They also need to have basic interpretive skills (or the ability to clearly and compellingly convey the substance of a program or event). The thirteen month-long **Refuge Naturalist Training Program** is designed to provide those skills and knowledge.

Training sessions will occur one Saturday per month for thirteen months. The typical training day will begin at 9:00 am and conclude by 3:00 pm. Sessions will be taught by subject matter experts – drawn from the ranks of refuge staff and beyond. Each session will have a classroom component followed by time spent outdoors on the national wildlife refuge.

Training sessions are scheduled for Feb 14, Mar 14, Apr 11, May 9, Jun 13, Jul 11, Aug 8, Sep 12, Oct 10, Nov 14, Dec 12, Jan 9 (2016), and Feb 13 (2016).

Applying to the Program: Program participants will be selected through a competitive application process. **Those interested should submit a resume and cover letter no later than Friday, January 9th, 2015.** These materials should be transmitted via email attachment to Matt Poole, Visitor Services Manager. His email address is matt.poole@fws.gov. Alternatively, the application materials can also be mailed to or dropped off at the Parker River NWR visitor center in Newburyport. The application materials should reflect what strengths the person would “bring to the table,” along with an explanation of WHY they would like to serve as a volunteer in the Parker River NWR visitor services program.

Commitment: **This training will be provided to successful applicants at no charge.** The expectation is that program graduates will commit themselves to serving as a visitor services volunteer following successful completion of the training. During the program, participants will be allowed to miss up to two training sessions. Again, this is a program to train visitor services volunteers.

Questions about the 2014/15 **Refuge Naturalist Training Program** should be directed to Matt Poole at matt.poole@fws.gov or (978) 465-5753, ext. 210.